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ABSTRACT

An estimated 100,000 to 200,000 hours of television programing per year are exported by the United States and the effects of this programing on other cultures, particularly those in developing nations, have generated concern. The appeal of this programing can be explained by its intended universality; it is produced within a multiethnic culture, is escapist in nature, and is designed for the "lowest common denominator." It is also being exported to nations for whom the cost of producing original programing is prohibitive. A frequently expressed conviction is that invasive United States programing causes "Americanization" of other cultures; however, this concept is undefined and research has not presented any conclusive evidence about it. While television is clearly active in the modernization of developing cultures, it is not clear whether the values and artistic traditions of a society will necessarily make way for Western popular culture. (DF)

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THE EXPORTATION OF U.S. TELEVISION ABROAD: A REVIEW

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In recent years there has been an increased interest in the amount of media exports, primarily television programming from the United States being exported to other countries. How completely the international community is being blanketed by television programming produced in the United States or in United States facilities abroad, has never been fully documented. An inventory would soon become obsolete because of the use of American materials, and American foreign broadcast holdings are expanding rapidly and continuously. "Each new electronic development widens the perimeter of American influence, and commercial activities which operate to promote even greater expansion" (Schiller, 1977, p. 174). Because of this tremendous influx of American television programming and specifically programming with an entertainment appeal, there is a need to understand what influences, if any, this programming has on the people of other cultures. Of particular importance is the effect it has on people in nations termed "developing" or "underdeveloped". The first section of this paper discusses the general extent of U.S. programming and reasons for its popularity abroad. The second section generally deals with a review of the literature which deals with possible effects of U.S. television programming on the adults of other cultures, as well as ways in which some researchers have attempted to study the effects. However, it must be understood that very little research has been done in studying U.S. programming effects in other cultures, therefore much of what has been written is speculation based on cultural research extended to an intercultural perspective.

U. S. Television Exports

"Probably few Americans are aware of the extent to which American television programs, films, advertising agencies, and other communication and entertainment efforts and activities now encompass the globe" (Skornia, 1964,

p. 13). As Varis (1974) states, that in some countries up to 80% of the television programs aired in their countries are imported from the United States, Britain, France, Japan, or West Germany. Also according to this study by Varis, the United States is the biggest exporter of television programming in the world with 100,000 to 200,000 hours exported annually. This is not surprising considering the formula used by television writers in the United States.

Included as a specific step in this formula for U.S. television writing is that the program concept be written with a universal appeal.¹ The universality of appeals in programming can be discussed in terms of the melting pot theory. U.S. TV programming is historically the most sophisticated in the world and was embraced by all cultures. Under this theory, U.S. television content has a universal appeal because it comes from a blend of ethnic origins. For example, U.S. humor is not coincidentally humorous in different cultures but humorous because it is based on ethnic humor.

The universality of the appeal refers to not only the subject matter involved (although this is a major portion as we will discuss) but also such things as where and how the program will be set; making sure that if this program were to be seen twenty years later or if it were to be seen in another country the major appeals would still be present and effective. Gudykunst and Caravaggi (1978), also state that the universality of American programming within the United States is a reason for their appeal in other countries. They argue that since the United States is a country made up of many and diverse sub-cultures the programs developed for broadcast must have an appeal which cuts through any boundaries which may exist because of this. They suggest that because messages are presented on a multi-level basis not only accounts for its wide appeal in the U.S. but also for its cross-cultural

appeal. They also discuss that the appeals of the American media are also influenced by the social values reflected and the escapism, or purely entertainment qualities the programs allow. As was evident during the Great Depression Era in the United States, the film audiences sought movie fare which dealt with escapist subject matter. Thus films with elaborate song and dance productions and themes dealing with just the opposite of what society was experiencing were prevalent throughout the country. Therefore we can generalize this feeling interculturally, particularly in developing countries, to be a reason why their population would desire escapism television programming. The social values reflected in programming relates to what I have said earlier about the universality of American programming. Individual actions and qualities and personal relations are what is projected in programming. Media consistently project a view of social inequality that stresses status and consensus, rather than class or specific cultural ideosyncrasies and fundamental social conflict (Tunstall, 1977).

When discussing the entertainment value of American programming and why it appeals to people in other cultures is a task that must be related and understood in terms of the economic system prevalent in the United States for TV programming. Programs come into being to attract an audience. Not to feed their minds, or elevate them morally or spiritually, but to deliver them to an advertiser. And this is why programs appeal to the "lowest national common denominator" in the U.S. (Tuchman, 1974). This type of programming is what broadcasters say the audiences want. However, these American TV products, for better or for worse, have set the tone for television programming throughout the world. What is of concern in this area, however, is what Tunstall (1977) has suggested when he states that American marketers have arrived by commercial trial and error at the formula which has enabled the

media to successfully appeal to large sectors of the potential audience. However, what Americans have learned to cope with and tolerate in programming such as women stereotypes or characterized images (such as Archie Bunker or Kojak), may be intolerable in other countries.

Aside from economic reasons concerning why U.S. programming has a universal appeal, are economic reasons why other countries choose to import U.S. television programming. It is simply not the "imperialism" of suppliers that explains the high rate of importing programs. Television stations, even small ones in poor countries, broadcast some 6-10 hours per day. That equals a minimum of 2000 hours per year (Katz, 1977, p. 115). Katz states that it would cost \$1000 to produce a rudimentary program for one hour, while if they import, for example Ironside, the price can range from \$300-400 to as little as \$250 (depending on the number of sets in the country, and of whether other countries in the same language or geographic region have adopted it). Even if money were available for the local production of so many hours, neither the talent nor professional personnel knowledgeable enough to produce local programming would be. This, combined with a lack of development in the other arts (e.g. theater, design, film) makes clear why the importing of high quality and generally available American programs constitutes 50% of many countries programming.

Also aiding in the expansion of U.S. programming to other countries are American manufacturing firms who have begun to make large investments in television advertising abroad (Tuchman, 1974). Dizard (1966) states:

The expansion of U.S. advertising agencies into the international market has served to spur this development...The American networks have moved into this market promising American advertisers to sell \$136 million in the foreign market (p. 167).

This increase in international advertising of United States products appears to be highly correlated with an increase in broadcasting of American program-

ming abroad (Gudykunst and Caravaggi, 1978).

While advertising, to be successful, must reflect a knowledge and understanding and a sensitivity to the distinctive way of life of each area, it may in turn shape the culture of its viewers. As Pollard suggests, whether advertising, be it good or bad, the cultural influences of advertising as it appears in various areas of the world, is tremendous (Pollard, 1976). There would seem to be little question that cultures or life style are influenced by ideas communicated through advertising.

One last reason I will discuss for the popularity of American programming in other countries is cited by Gudykunst and Caravaggi (1978), and Baensch (1978). They state that English is increasingly becoming a "universal" language. That its popularity and usage is spreading throughout the world. Baensch (1978) cites last years' statistics to record that about 9% of the world's population uses English as its first language; 35% as a second or significant language. In fact, English has become the obligatory second language of the world (Baensch, 1978, p. 45). These authors further exemplify this phenomena by citing an example in Japan where at least one American program per week is aired in English as an aid for teaching English (Gudykunst and Caravaggi, 1978; and Baensch, 1978).

That the U.S. is a traditional and giant trading country is no surprise to anyone. But seldom do we think of media as being among America's biggest exports. The sale of Boeing Aircraft to China, wheat to Russia, and the multinational corporate structure of IBM and ITT were prominent symbols of American trade in the quarter century after World War II. To these can be added news services, some magazines, films, and television programming (Read, 1978). The evidence is there plainly observable. The prime consumers, those whom the U.S. media exporters seek to inform, but even more so to

entertain, are non-Americans. These media reach every corner of the world, from the near-saturation of the English speaking Canadian provinces to restricted penetration of Communist-ruled countries. Telefilm producers in the U.S. derive a vital portion of their incomes from foreign sales, and as Dizard (1966) states, is the difference between a profit and loss for the major American networks; and for the two major exporters, the Motion Picture Export Association of America, and Viacom.

From this brief, but comprehensible summary of the amount of U.S. programming exported and reasons for its popularity, discussion will now pertain to the implications the viewing of U.S. programming has on the peoples of other cultures.

The Intercultural Implications on Peoples of Other Cultures

The tensions and challenges growing out of the foreign circulation of American programming gives a sense of urgency to the need for understanding effects. Little has been done so far in terms of studies dealing with the effects of U.S. TV programming on other cultures. The little that so far has been published on the subject has been generally of the media-fault-finding variety. For instance, the Journal of Communication, (1974) acknowledging that "the most persuasive, and least studied form of international communication is the world trade in canned images and sounds" (p. 90) and printed three articles with the overall heading, "Cultural Exchange-or Invasion?" These authors unanimously see U.S. TV exports to be an invader of other countries with most of the negative aspects the word connotes. The major areas of interest with respect to the viewing of American programming centers around whether "cultural diffusion" actually does take place through this viewing.

What most of the literature indicates in regards to U.S. television programming abroad is that it will cause the "Americanization" of other cultures.

However, as Young Yum Kim (1978) has discussed, anthropological studies comparing and defining cultural forces (especially cultural values and norms) have failed to provide a consistent or concrete picture of American culture. Kim cites a study by Hsu (1972) which clearly points to this problem:

It is clear that we do not have a precise idea as to what we mean by "Americanization," nor have anthropologists who deal with culture contact and change helped in this regard...How can we gauge the extent of acculturation without a precise notion about the culture to which the acculturated have supposedly acculturated themselves. The picture is by no means clear. We must develop a more precise idea on the notion of Americanization before we can relate this idea to other cultures (p. 111).²

Despite the fact that the United States is composed of many "sub-cultures" and the effects of television hasn't been proven within this culture, many writers are quick to assess that the effects of U.S. television programming will have negative effects abroad. They also presume it will diffuse the American culture (whatever it consists of) through the programming.

Many writers contend that cultural "authenticity" does not survive the influx of TV programming from the U.S. Elihu Katz, writing for a symposium for the Journal of Communication (1977) discusses television in terms of the effects it has on modernization. He points out that where the processes of national integration and economic development have taken hold, the side-effects of modernization have become increasingly evident. He contends that with modernization comes a "standardization and secularization" of culture. The traditional values and attitudes prevalent are given way to Western popular culture. Furthering his contention he goes on to say that this not only threatens local tribal cultures but also great traditions of societies such as Thailand or Israel (Katz, 1977).

Herbert Schiller (1969) also advocates such a position as Katz.

Schiller states that the cultural homogenization that has been underway for years in the United States now threatens to over-take the globe.³ He draws on Mordecai, a long time student of the theater, who asserted in 1965 that, "the era of mechanized and central communication via the media, (i.e., television) has created a gleichschaltung unprecedented in history (quoted in Schiller, 1969, p. 112).

What differentiates Katz from Schiller however, is that Schiller views the importation of U.S. programming as being "dumped" on developing countries. He contends that this "dumping" further discourages domestic programming in all but the richest countries. But, as Katz points out, the problem is as much one of demand of programming as it is of supply (Katz, 1977). And the extent of the effects that U.S. programming from imports would have on the people of a culture would depend on the culture itself. Do they want their culture to be overwhelmed and homogenized? If not, this would be their incentive to produce their own programming, particularly that rooted in tradition, or to reject programming imports.

Whereas both Schiller and Katz imply that American television programming brought into a developing country will cause a cultural homogenization, Ithiel de Sola Pool suggests a different position, and we argue his contention to be more accurate in terms of the effects U.S. television has on the adults of another country. He contends that:

The present flow (of television programming), which is predominantly from a few centers in the developed countries to the rest of the world, will change fairly rapidly to a more dispersed network. And this network will most probably originate from countries (both developed and developing) which encourages free flow and free development in culture (Pool, 1977, p. 139).

He points out that all materials imported from other cultures are selectively adopted and adapted acquiring meanings and features that integrate

them with the new environment and make them quite different from what they were in their place of origin.

Pool, citing a study in Karl Deutsch's Communication and Social Integration, reveals significant data which suggests that a time cycle in the balance between domestic and international flows, in which the international flow grows first, followed by the domestic flow. This is very relevant to the study of television in developing countries. A cultural movement begins in a few innovative centers and then as a consequence much communication to the world takes place. Gradually, other places become involved in the new cultural activity and it is founded in other places (Pool, 1977). This suggests that in due time, when these cultures are ready, they will develop their own programming with their own ideas, social values and norms prevalent throughout the TV programming.

It must be remembered that the market place for ideas is not one in which imports flow easily. Schiller implies that all U.S. TV programming imported by developing countries will cause immediate diffusion of the ideas presented within this programming context. But, especially in entertainment programming, this belief doesn't sustain. Pool counters this argument when he writes:

In general, culture does not need protection. People are already attached to culture. If the culture is satisfactory, if it is not itself already in the process of decomposition, the audience will not look primarily abroad (quoted by Mowlana, 1977, p. 430).

Audience rejection of messages contrary to existing predispositions, the anchorage of already existing images (which includes opinions, attitudes, and beliefs) in a culture, the ineffectiveness of communication, stemming from many foreign sources, and audience resistance to perceived manipulation attempts--all of these among others, have been well documented as factors which are likely to preclude the success of any endeavor designed to change

the existing images of some target audience (Klapper, 1960; Rosnow and Robinson, 1967). Therefore, the impact of foreign TV has a limited effect on people in other cultures and would have very limited impact. Pool (1977) lists three variables which deal with why foreign TV has a limited effect on people in other cultures. The first is that they are protected by barriers of language. People would rather see a program made in their own idiom than one with subtitles or even one that is dubbed. The second variable Pool discusses is that they are protected by barriers of social support. Much of the enjoyment of media is discussing it with one's friends. Thirdly, local products are protected by barriers of culture. Domestic products portray characters eating the foods of the people, dressing as they do and celebrating events of national or cultural significance to them. Foreign imports have jokes that are harder to understand, unknown stereotypes and situations that do not come from their daily lives.

A perfect example of these three factors is occurring in Latin America. The life's blood of Latin American TV is the Tele-Novela. Two or three of these soap operas, locally produced, frequently follow each other right through prime-time each night. Its content resembles the lives of the viewers, or how they would like their lives to be, with happy endings emanating in each one. It is a very inexpensively produced program; simple sets, unknown locations, but because of the ability of the audience to identify cultural idioms, it beats any American program put against it (Green, 1972).

Two perspectives have been proposed by Nan Lin for studying communication effects which can be applied to whether the importing of U.S. television actually spreads American ideas abroad. The first perspective is the directive perspective and deals with the psychological or behavioral influence on the receivers. In other words, this perspective makes the important assumption or postulation that a communication situation is directive in that

the effects on participants depends, to a large extent, on the manipulation and control of the source, the message, the channel and the like (Lin, 1978). One immediate deduction of this assumption is that it is crucial to examine the control and manipulation of the communication variables by the "directive participants".

An extension of this perspective is the concern with the manipulation and control of the media (i.e. U.S. television programming) content, and organization to see the extent of the dominance of foreign media abroad. While no explicit association has been made in relation to this extension, the prominence and visibility of the topics and critical writings on it leads to the assumption that the media does influence, at least to some extent, the foreign audiences perceptions, attitudes and/or behavior. The directive perspective, therefore, is source oriented.

This perspective corresponds to the contention stated earlier by Katz and Schiller. Furthering their argument, recognition of the promise of television imports from the U.S. in the connection with cultural effects leads to the realization that entertainment is not neutral but an active force in the communication of values. If this perspective is to be taken as the basis for studying U.S. TV programming effects, then the implication for all this is to take entertainment seriously. If broadcast is to be harnessed to the goal of promoting indigenous values, it is important to understand how entertainment works. That means understanding what message is implicit in Hawaii 5-0; what people perceive in it; what they enjoy and then analyzing the experience with entertainment in the traditional culture (Lin, 1978; and Katz, 1977).

The second perspective can be utilized as an extension of Ithiel de Sola Pool's contention stated earlier. This is the selective perspective. The receiving participants in the communication situation dictate, to a large

extent, the content to which they wish to be exposed to for purposes and uses defined by themselves. This perspective is receiver-oriented; the emphasis is on the active and selective participation of the audience in the communication situation (Lin, 1978).

It should be apparent that a third and probably more fruitful perspective lies in the intersecting of the directive and selective perspectives. For example, the evidence that the mass media in a social system are controlled and manipulated by certain interest groups gain significance only if it has been demonstrated that the content in the mass media (i.e. U.S. TV programming) as manipulated and controlled by the interest groups is assimilated and used by the audience.

Similarly, the demonstration that a user assimilates communication content to gratify his needs would be incomplete as far as communication effects are concerned, if the extent to which the content has been controlled by certain interest groups is not examined (Lin, 1978).

As both Pool's position and Lin's perspectives suggest, a culture's influence on its people is manifested mainly through their perceptions. Marshall Singer (1976) defines culture using a perceptual model. By perception, Singer suggests a process by which an individual selects, evaluates, and organizes stimuli from the external environment. The important point in Singer's perceptual model is that the same stimuli are often perceived and organized differently based on the culture in which a person was raised.

Entertainment programming can be perceived within Singer's perceptual model. Heller (1978), in a review of programming for the American Broadcast Company Network, states that entertainment programs are basically an emotional experience. It requires reasoning and the adaptation of perceived stimuli to a pleasurable or useful purpose in one's own life. He goes on to say that when entertainment is regarded as worthwhile, it has invariably

stirred emotions and feelings with which the viewer is concerned or has provided information or a life's lesson example applicable in the viewer's personal terms. The relationship between entertainment and learning is a pervasive one.

Under Singer's model, he contends that each identity group has its own culture, rather than attempting to consider only each society as having its own culture. Therefore, we can look at U.S. TV in a different way. Countries importing programs from the U.S. may find gratifications through the mechanism of identification with various characters and participants. To the extent to which a viewer can identify with roles, events, and developments in a program, he is not only entertained but may be gripped by a series of transient or lasting emotions due to the recognitions of identity groups (or cultures in Singer's terms) (Heller, 1978).

The fact that television aids in promoting new ideas and issues by reflecting real life occurrences can have an important impact on society as an aid to the diffusing of "American ways of life". Mass media generally, and television specifically, have as great potential for social change as for maintaining the status quo. Television can exercise a significant influence in helping remove prejudices and stereotypes, or it can accelerate them. But what must be remembered is that television can't and shouldn't carry the whole burden of resocialization of a culture. Rather, it must accompany primary socializing agents (i.e., family, peers, school, religion, etc.) in order for attitudes, images, and behaviors of people to change in a culture. The sudden exposure to U.S. television programming cannot do it alone. A case in point is the study of the impact of American television programs on the children of Formosa which showed that the children's central beliefs were not influenced by exposure to American TV, and they simply rejected new views that were presented (cited in O'Connell, 1977). (If

children, the most vulnerable group in any culture, were not influenced, then it can be assumed that the adults in the culture would not become resocialized as a result of exposure to U.S. TV programming.⁴⁾

A study conducted by O'Connell (1977) on the effects of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) Frontier Television Service on the Inuit demonstrated that television has little, if any effect on the values of the culture in which it is placed. In this study, television showed a social impact on specific attitudes, but basically, the Eskimo values remained the same.

Although television may have made the Inuit more aware of the changes in the modern world, they still feel they cannot, or do not want to be a part of them. In his discussion of this study, Coldevin (1977, p. 145) states that although television has captured a large part of their lives, it is, for the most part, "irrelevant to their deep-rooted social customs and environment." Eskimo values prevail over those presented by the coming of television. He also suggests that the television service provided may increase the cultural gap because it presents goals and models for action which have little relevance to traditional ways of life (Dicks, 1977, p. 129).

These findings were reinforced by a 1975 study of American programming in Canada (Sparkes, 1977) which measured attitudinal difference associated with watching foreign television signals. To assess attitudes toward their own and the foreign country which might be associated with viewing the foreign signals, respondents in the U.S. and Canada were asked to comparatively rate both countries on a series of dimensions. The Canadians were also questioned about their perception of the important issues of the day to identify any possible agenda-setting effects of CBS news for Canadian viewers. Only one significant difference was found in the results. Heavier viewers

of CBS news rated Canada higher on the world leadership scale, which could mean that exposure to the U.S. news program might actually enhance Canadian viewers' image of their own country.

The overall conclusion gained from these studies of cross-cultural communications between the United States and Canada is that there is very little attitudinal difference or effect associated with watching the foreign television signals. Canadian viewers appeared to be affected very little by the American television they were exposed to. Canadians used the American television shows to supplement what they already liked best about their own television. Sparkes suggests that:

The more foreign television diverges from indigenous cultures, the greater the potential for negative impact. But the greater the divergence the greater the selective nonexposure, and therefore the less the actual impact (1977, p. 47).

However, in analyzing the results of this study, it must be remembered that the respondents surveyed were already involved in a media-rich section of Canada. Perhaps the impact of these foreign messages in a media-poor section could be quite different, especially if the foreign messages were the only, or the most dominant ones available.

Even if basic values remain the same, U.S. television programming has been proven to influence the attitudes, behaviors, and lifestyles of the cultures it is accepted by. For example, in the study on the CBC Frontier Television Service and the Inuit (Coldevin, 1977), television was found to have a negative effect on the leisure time activities of the Eskimos. Television viewing took place at the expense of radio listening, Bible reading, hobbies, and visiting neighbors, all of which were principal activities prior to television. Similar results were found by Madigan and Peterson (1977) who conducted a study on the impact of television on school-age children in Wales, Alaska in 1973. Interviews with the village residents revealed that

although informal social activities such as visiting patterns were only minimally affected by television, formal social events were strongly affected. Attendance at meetings such as the school board and the village council fell to near zero during the television period. These activities could just not compete with television programming.

During the six months of television in Wales, the village made creative use of the medium, fitting it neatly into its way of life. In a set of standardized tests, the children demonstrated significant improvement in certain kinds of auditory information processing and in verbal intelligence after the television service was introduced. However, people far removed from the village criticized the project saying that television might play a role in the "eroding of the traditional Eskimo culture and in hastening the decline of the autonomy of the village" (Madigan and Peterson, 1977, p. 186).

Television can have either a positive or a negative influence on the culture in which it is adopted. The Wales school children increased their scores on the standardized tests after the arrival of television, and the Inuit increased their knowledge of national and international issues. However, a heavy price was paid in that their interpersonal relationships suffered as their visiting patterns and attendance at important meetings declined.

Yet Vishwa M. Mishra (1973) suggests that this media is a necessary component of modernization in developing countries. Mishra states that this exposure of foreign media (i.e., television programming) at least minimally is a necessary condition for modernization because "media define (designer role), and trigger (activator role) modernization" (Mishra, 1973, p. 215). The proposition then, can be generated that increasing media use may raise the level of modernization among people of modernizing nations.

However, it can be contended that the effect of merely increasing communication messages through U.S. TV alone would not cause a corresponding increase in the level of modernization. Mishra's research concludes that the best way for television programming to have an effect on the culture utilizing it is for it to be as local as possible. Mishra quotes Dube who concurs with this line of thinking:

In the final analysis, the problems of communication and media are those of adapting the agents of change, media of communication and its form and content, to the cultures, value system, attitudes, and world view of the community. The degree of success will depend upon the ability to anticipate the culture-directed responses of the people and to adapt the media program to them (quoted in Mishra, 1973, p. 216).

This implies that because American television is not culture-directed, the effects of its programming content will not be as strong as locally produced television programs.

In additions to potentially changing behavior patterns of the viewers, another potential outcome in viewing television from the United States is the development of stereotypes, opinions, and attitudes about Americans. The accuracy of the stereotypes shouldn't be of major concern. Rather, how these stereotypes will influence the foreign viewers attitudes toward Americans and their potential future interactions is of major concern (Gudykunst and Caravaggi, 1978).

Stereotypes, as Porter and Samovar (1976) discuss, work in various ways to affect our communication. By predisposing us to behave in specific ways when confronted by a particular stimulus and by causing us to attach generalized attributes to people, we allow stereotypes and preconceived attitudes to interfere and limit effective communication with that person. Therefore, after viewing U.S. TV, a person from another culture meeting an American for the first time, may selectively perceive certain aspects of behavior which reinforces the stereotype and ignores what is contradictory.

This is of particular importance when we consider what stereotypes or images of Americans might be created for the people of developing countries, whose images have been noted to be gross, poorly organized, and illarticulated in the attitude structure of the individual (Smith, 1965). There images are developed without first hand contact with the image object, and they have, as sources of information, only those channels provided for them by their own society (like the television programs they import).

In this same vein, certain television content from the U.S. viewed can cause a boomerang effect to occur. The viewers perceive the content of American programming through a filter consisting of attitudes, and opinions. In general, if the programming falls within his acceptance, the viewer in the other culture will perceive the programming content to be closer to his own position than it actually is. A study conducted by Granzberg, Steinbring, and Hamer (1977) on members of the Cree Indian communities in northern Manitoba, Canada illustrates this boomerang effect. Although this was the first time that the Cree had viewed television, its magic was not new to them because they believe that they have always had the ability to bring "live" sights and sounds from distant places into their midst through conjuring. For example, during the ceremony of the "shaking tent," the village shaman enters a tent and calls upon various spirits to enter, which causes it to shake. An important characteristic of the spirits is that once they are summoned to the tent for questioning by the shaman, they must respond honestly.

The Cree consider the similarities between TV and the shaking tent to far outweigh the differences, and have given TV the same Cree name by which the shaking tent is known: "koosabachigan." As a result, the events on TV, even the fictional ones, are often taken to be real and of practical consequence.

The meanings of the shaking tent also influence the Cree's usage of TV,

especially in regards to their children. The most traditional Cree refuse to let their children watch TV because they believe that communication across great distances and the bringing of the news is the business of the shaman. He is able to defend himself against spirits, but children are not safe from the evil consequences of TV. They believe that there has been an increase in sex, use of drugs, and violence among children which can be attributed to watching TV.

The children's responses to TV show other relations to the traditional ways of conjuring spirits. Modern Cree boys become very attached to certain superheroes on TV, take their names as their nicknames, and imitate their behaviors. This is similar to the shaking tent spirits who become friends of the shaman through dreams, in which he obtains a new name, behavior, and personality traits of his superhelpers.

Another traditional way the Cree have felt able to communicate with distant points is through dreaming. Like TV, dreams tell about things happening all around the world. The Cree interpret dreams as adventures of the wandering soul which are omens and directions for future behavior. There is evidence that the Cree now use TV to study the programs for omens, dangers, and directives concerning proper behavior pathways into the future.

The close relationship between TV viewing and dreaming can also produce negative consequences. Many Cree feel that TV, with its sex and violence, is like an evil spirit which is capable of producing nightmares and possessing the bodies of children to make them act badly. One Cree man bought a TV and then destroyed it the same evening, complaining of the evil on it and the bad things it does to children.

The traditional conceptions of communication among the Cree cause them to be very susceptible to TV, to take it literally and seriously, to idolize

the superhero characters, to read special messages into it concerning behavior requirements, and to be especially concerned about its potential harm to children. TV has diffused in form to the Cree, but its Western meaning and function have not. The Cree have added and substituted new meanings and functions which have influenced TV's impact, while at the same time preserving their own culture.

The opposite can also occur if U.S. programming content deals with something that contrasts with the viewer's position. He may move his own position still farther so that the message (television content) will have a boomerang effect on his opinions (Sherif, Sherif and Nebergall, 1965).

Given the potential for Boomerang effect and attitude effects from television content, it is difficult to say with confidence what effects will occur; what programs will specify any effects; or the condition that effects will occur under.⁵

Conclusion

Researchers themselves have not presented any conclusive evidence thus far to specifically examine the effects of U.S. programming on other cultures. It is clear, however, that media are capable of "opening a window to the world," no matter how this view is presented. It is clear that it is an element present during the modernization of developing countries, what is not clear is whether the values and artistic tradition of a society must also make for the homogenized popular culture of the West. This is the basic issue which underlies the arguments of authors earlier presented such as Kata and Pool.

The studies done in the Far North, discussed in this paper, indicate clearly that in trying to determine the effects of television on different cultures, researchers cannot consider the television experience to have the

same effect in every culture. Television means different things to different people, and its impact on each culture will vary according to the traditions that surround it.

Despite the exchange of foreign programming into cultures previously without them, it is doubtful that mass media, in the foreseeable future, can achieve the same level of interactive ability and predictability as human participants. As Miller and Steinburg (1975) suggest, the interpersonal exchange is more effective because of the greater predictability of responses among participants (cited in Gudykunst, 1977). Thus the current proposition that interpersonal exchange is most effective in the transmission and maintenance of meanings shall probably remain valid for a long time, even though international television can play a role in defining and clarifying the world beyond their own borders.

Notes

- 1 Some of the information about the universal appeal of U.S. television programming was disseminated from classroom lectures from Dr. Tom Donohue's course Network Criticism and Dr. Harvey Jassem's course Broadcast Management at the University of Hartford.
- 2 As confusing as this statement by Hsu may sound, it holds much validity. I include it as a possible reason why research dealing with U.S. media effects on other cultures is limited, since so much still needs to be learned about American culture.
- 3 Schiller resembles Hsu, mentioned earlier in this paper, in that both recognize the many levels or sub-cultures prevalent in the United States.
- 4 For more information on the intercultural implication of children and television refer to "Children and television: an intercultural perspective," by Caravaggi and Gudykunst, 1978. A paper prepared for the Eastern Communication Association convention.
- 5 Some aspects of the Boomerang effect were again disseminated from Dr. Tom Donohue in lecture.

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